

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1366

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 0061

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EAID PO

SUBJ: CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES AND CODEL WILSON

SUMMARY: PM, TAKING TIME OUT FROM BUSY SCHEDULE, SPENT ONE AND HALF HOURS WITH FIRST MULTI-MEMBER CODEL TO VISIT PORTUGAL SINCE REVOLUTION. PM URGED UNDERSTANDING ON PART OF US FOR PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE, ASKED SPECIFIC QUESTIONS REGARDING RECENT AID PACKAGE TO PORTUGAL, DISCUSSED ARMS EMBARGO AND US PRESS, AND LAUDED WATERGATE AS EXAMPLE OF US DEMOCRACY IN ACTION. PM ALSO SAID HE FELT PORTUGUESE WOULD CHOOSE IN FUTURE TO REMAIN WITH WEST WITH WHICH THEY HAVE NATURAL TIES, AND SKIRTED QUERY REGARDING GOP REQUEST FOR MILITARY AID IN FUTURE. SESSION FRIENDLY AND DIRECT, LEAVING CODELS WITH FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF SINCERITY AND CONCERN FOR DEMOCRACY OF PM. END SUMMARY.

1. CONGRESSMEN WILSON, SARBANES, EDWARDS AND STAFF MEMBER HACKETT CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER VASCO DOS SANTOS GONCALVES AT 1245 PM JANUARY 3 IN HIS OFFICE AT SAO BENTO. PRIME MINISTER, WHO ENGAGED ALL DAY IN IMPORTANT CABINET MEETING, AGREED AT LEAST MINUTE TO RECEIVE DELEGATION, LEAVING CABINET SESSION. OTHER THAN TWO INTERPRETERS, EMBOFF AND AN AIDE, NO ONE ELSE PRESENT DURING MEETING WHICH LASTED A SURPRISING HOUR AND A HALF.

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2. PRIME MINISTER BEGAN BY NOTING THAT FACT THAT HE HAD LEFT

CABINET SESSION MEANT TO BE AN INDICATION OF IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED TO VISIT BY CODEL. AFTER A FEW PLEASANTRIES ON BOTH SIDES, CONGRESSMAN WILSON REMARKED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO THANK PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT ON BEHALF OF CONGRESS FOR AID RENDERED USG IN OCTOBER AT TIME OF ARAB-ISRAEL WAR. PORTUGUESE PERMISSION FOR USG TO USE LAJES IN RESUPPLY OF ISRAEL HAD GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO SUCCESS OF US POLICY. PRIME MINISTER MADE NO REPLY NOR GAVE ANY INDICATION OF HOW HE FELT REGARDING ISSUE, ALTHOUGH LACK OF RESPONSE, EITHER VERBAL OR PHYSICAL LEFT EMBOFF WITH IMPRESSION THAT PM PERSONALLY DISAPPROVED OF GOP PERMITTING AIRLIFT.

3. CONGRESSMAN WILSON THEN REMARKED THAT AMERICANS IN GENERAL AND CONGRESS IN PARTICULAR HAD, CONTRARY TO WHAT MANY PORTUGUESE SEEM TO THINK, WELCOMED PORTUGUESE MOVES TOWARDS DECOLONIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION AT HOME. REP WILSON SAID THAT THIS APPROVAL SPECIFICALLY EMBODIES IN SENSE OF CONGRESS PREAMBLE TO RECENT AID BILL GRANTING ASSISTANCE TO PORTUGAL. HE NOTED THAT THIS PORTION OF BILL NOT OPPOSED BY ANHONE, AND ASKED WHETHER PM AWARE OF THIS. PM SAID HE NOT AWARE OF THIS UNANIMITY, BUT HAPPY TO HEAR THIS, SINCE HE HAD IMPRESSION THAT NOT EVERYONE IN US APPROVED OF PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION. AT THIS POINT HE MENTIONED HE PLEASED AT UNDERSTANDING FOR REVOLUTION SHOWN BY DEPARTING AMBASSADOR AND DCM.

4. PRIME MINISTER THEN REFERRED TO AID PACKAGE FOR PORTUGAL, ABOUT WHICH HE EXPRESSED SOME CONFUSION. PM SAID HIS STAFF WAS WORKING UP LIST OF SPECIFIC CLARIFICATION POINTS TO SUBMIT TO USG, WHICH STUDY APPARENTLY NOT YET PREPARED. PM HAD INTERPRETER READ OUT FULL TEXT OF DEPT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF AID PACKAGE, AND THEN BEGAN ASKING QUESTIONS. REGARDING LOAN OF \$20 MILLION, PM ASKED ABOUT CONDITIONS OF OFFER, REPAYMENT DETAILS, AND WHETHER THIS A USG OR PRIVATE BANK LOAN. CODEL RESPONDED THAT IT PRIVATE LOAN WITH USG GUARANTEE. GONCALVES THEN REFERRED TO OFFER OF ASSISTANCE OF EXPERTS, ASKING WHETHER USG WOULD PICK EXPERTS OR WHETHER GOP COULD SELECT THOSE NEEDED. REP WILSON REASSURED HIM THAT THIS A DECISION FOR GOP TO MAKE. ON SCHOLARSHIP AID TO PORTUGAL, PM WANTED TO KNOW MORE DETAILS. FINALLY, HE WANTED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER \$25 MILLION OF AID WOULD BE PROVIDED FOR EACH FORMER/

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PRESENT COLONY, AND, IF THIS A GLOBAL SUM, COULD GOP SELECT PERCENTAGE PROVIDED TO EACH COLONY. CODELS RESPONDED THAT THEY UNSURE OF ALL DETAILS OF PACKAGE. REPRESENTATIVE SARBANES SAID THAT HE HAD FOUND THIS DISCUSSION USEFUL AND FELT THAT USG NEEDED TO PROVIDE MORE SPECIFICS TO GOP. CODEL AND PM AGREED TO SUBMIT A LIST OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO EMBASSY LISBON, WITH CODEL WILSON PROMISING RAPID USG REPLY, WITHIN 10 DAYS AT MAXIMUM AFTER RECEIPT.

5. STILL ON SUBJECT, PM ASKED, AS AFTERTHOUGHT, WHEN PORTUGAL COULD BEGIN TO USE FUNDS. CODEL NOT SURE WHETHER FUNDS YET AVAILABLE, AND PROMISED TO QUERY COMMITTEE. REP SARBANES ALSO SUGGESTED THAT TI WOULD BE USEFUL TO PROVIDE GOP WITH CLARIFICATION OF WHAT CONGRESS HAD IN MIND WHEN BILL PASSED INTO LAW.

6. CODEL WILSON THEN ASKED PM WHETHER GOP WOULD BE REQUESTING MILITARY ASSISTANCE NEXT YEAR AS WELL AS ECONOMIC IN ORDER TO BE A STRONGER NATO PARTNER. PM RESPONDED "I CANNOT ANSWER THIS PRECISELY, WHICH DOES NOT MEAN THAT OUR COUNTRY IS NOT SITUATED IN A CERTAIN GEOSTRATEGIC CONTEXT". HE NOTED THAT AFM PROGRAM CALLED FOR RESPECT FOR ALL TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS MADE BY FORMER GOVERNMENT. PORTUGAL WANTS TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES REGARDLESS OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL SYSTEM ON BASIS OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE OTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. "WE WANT BEST RELATIONS WITH US PEOPLE. IT IS UP TO PORTUGUESE PEOPLE IN FUTURE TO DECIDE REGARDING NATO ALLIANCE, BUT I THINK THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE KNOW THAT PORTUGAL IS PART OF A GEOGRAPHIC AND WORLD CONTECT, AND DO NOT WANT TO CUT NATURAL TIES IN THIS SENSE". THEY OF COURSE WANT TO SEE AN END TO BLOC POLITICS AND WANT TO SEE AN END TO COLD WAR. PM SAID HE HOPED PRESENT INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT CONFERENCES AND CSCE WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. HE APPLAUDED RECENT US-SOVIET AGREEMENTS.

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1367

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 0061

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7. PM, CONTINUING IN SOMEWHAT DISJOINTED AND EMOTIONAL FASHION, SAID PORTUGAL HAD JUST FINISHED A 13-YEAR WAR IN AFRICA, AND HE IS SURE US KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO END A LONG, UNPOPULAR WAR. PORTUGAL WANTS DEVELOP BEST RELATIONS WITH US. "WE HAVE NO PREJUDICE AGAINST US--DAILY EVENTS SHOW THAT. PLEASE TELL AMERICAN PEOPLE WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN HERE. WE ARE ACHIEVING SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS THAT YOU AMERICANS HAVE ENJOYED FOR YEARS. WE'VE HAD 50 YEARS OF FASCISM ALL DURING PERIOD WHEN YOU HAD ROOSEVELT, WENDELL WILKIE AND KENNEDY".

8. CONGRESSMAN SARBANES THEN ASKED WHETHER ARMS EMBARGO HAD CONTRIBUTED TO ANY CHILLNESS IN US-GOP RELATIONS IN PAST. PM, LAUGHING, RESPONDED THAT AS A MILITARY MAN WHO HAD SERVED IN AFRICA HE WAS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH ARMS EMBARGO. HE SAID NATO ARMS WERE IN MOZAMBIQUE WHEN HE THERE, BUT WERE NEVER USED IN WAR BECAUSE OF EXISTENCE OF US ARMS EMBARGO. "WE WERE SHORT OF ARMS, AND WANTED TO USE NAT WEAPONS BUT WERE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY US. WE UNDERSTAND EMBARGO AND REALIZE IT NOT DIRECTED AGAINST PORTUGUESE PEOPLE BUT AGAINST HER FORMER GOVERNMENT".

9. GONCALVES THEN STATED WITH EMOTION THAT WHAT PORTUGAL WANTS IS FOR US TO UNDERSTAND PORTUGAL'S REVOLUTION--BE CALM, COOL, DON'T BE ANTI-COMMUNIST OF STERILE MCCARTHY TYPE. "LET US PROCEED WITHOUT KIND OF INTERFERENCE YOU READ SO
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MUCH ABOUT IN PRESS THESE DAYS (AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO CIA). I'VE BEEN VERY FRANK WITH YOU. WHEN I SERVED IN LAJES AS A LIEUTENANT I HAD GOOD, OPEN CONTACTS WITH AMERICANS. I UNDERSTAND YOUR PRACTICAL SPIRIT AS A PEOPLE, AND I THINK THIS KIND OF OPEN, FRANK CONTACT SHOULD EXIST AT ALL LEVELS". (IN SAME BREATH) PM SAID THAT AMERICANS DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE UNDER 50 YEARS OF FASCISM. WHAT THE CONGRESS DID TO NIXON IS AN EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRACY. "WE SEE US AS A GREAT DEMOCRACY, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE INTERNAL PROBLEMS WHICH YOU DO NOT ATTEMPT TO HIDE. WATERGATE IS AN EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AT WORK. I HOPE REAL US DEMOCRATS UNDERSTAND HISTORIC MOMENT US AND PORTUGUESE ARE LIVING". CONGRESSMAN SARBANES RESPONDED THAT "WE DO UNDERSTAND THIS AND ARE STRUCK BY WHAT WE HAVE SEEN. PORTUGUESE EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH POLITICAL FREEDOM FOR FIRST TIME ONE FOR WHICH GREAT SUPPORT EXISTS IN US. RESTORATION OF FREEDOM OF PEOPLE TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES OF TREMENDOUS IMPORTANCE". PM REPLIED THAT HE HOPED CODELS WOULD BE "MILITANTS IN TELLING TRUTH ABOUT PORTUGAL TO CONGRESS".

10. REP WILSON INTRODUCED CONG. EDWARDS AS REPRESENTATIVE OF CONSERVATIVE OPINION IN CONGRESS. REP EDWARDS SECONDED

WHAT OTHER REPRESENTATIVES HAD SAID ABOUT SUPPORT FOR DE-COLONIZATION AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN CONGRESS AND NATION AT LARGE. WILSON REMARKED AT THIS POINT THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THE PM OVERESTIMATED DEGREE OF CRITICISM OF PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION IN US PRESS. CONG. WILSON SAID HE HAD SEEN NOTHING BUT GREATEST PRAISE FOR NEW PORTUGAL, ESPECIALLY IN LARGER NEWSPAPERS, AND SLIGHT CRITICISM. PM ADMITTED HE HAD NOTED A CHANGE IN RECENT MONTHS BUT DECRIED PRESS COVERAGE OF PORTUGAL IN FIRST FEW MONTHS AFTER APRIL 25.

11. CONGRESSMAN SARBANES CONCLUDED MEETING BY STATING THAT EVERYONE RELIEVED THAT WE CAN NOW HAVE OUR HEARTS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, WHEREAS BEFORE IT WAS A RELATIONSHIP OF NECESSITY WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM. "OURS CAN NOW BE A RELATIONSHIP OF AFFECTION". CONGALVES SAID US EXPERIENCE HAD GUIDED PORTUGUESE ASPIRATIONS DURING FASCIST PERIOD.

12. COMMENT: RATHER COLD AND FORMAL, AND OBVIOUSLY TIRED AT BEGINNING OF INTERVIEW, PM WARMED UP AS HE PROCEEDED,
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CONCLUDING IN GOOD HUMOR AND FRANKNESS. HE IMPRESSED CODELS AS SINCERE, DIRECT AND BASICALLY INFORMAL, NOT THE KIND OF PRIME MINISTER THEY HAD EXPECTED TO MEET. THEY WERE STRUCK BY APPARENT DISORGANIZATION IN TOP LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AS EVIDENCED BY FACT THAT PM HIMSELF PREOCCUPIED WITH SMALL PETTY DETAILS OF AID PROPOSAL, WHICH ELSEWHERE WOULD BE SPEEDILY HANDLED BY TECHNICIANS. FACT THAT PM WILLING TO SPEND SUCH A LONG TIME WHEN HE BUSY WITH PRESSING MATTERS OF STATE SURPRISED CODELS, WHO HAD BELIEVED VISIT WOULD BE MERE FORMAILTY. PM NEITHER HOSTILE NOR CURT WITH CODELS, WHICH SUPPORTS HIS INDIRECT ASSERTION THAT HE NOT PREJUDICED AGAINST US, AND APPLAUDS WAY WE LIVE DEMOCRACY.

13. MAJOR REVELATION OF SUBSTANTIVE NATURE TO COME OUT OF SESSION WAS PM'S REMARK THAT HE BELIEVED PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WOULD CHOOSE TO REMAIN A PART OF THE GEOSTRATEGIC CONTEXT IN WHICH THEY FIND THEMSELVES PHYSICALLY, IN OTHER WORDS, THAT THEY WOULD CHOOSE TO REMAIN ORIENTED TO WEST. UNTIL NOW WE KNOW OF NO SIMILAR PUBLIC STATEMENT BY PM. WHETHER HE SAID THIS ONLY TO PLEASE CONGRESSMEN OR WHETHER HE EXPRESSING A PERSONAL CONVICTION HARD TO ASSESS, ALTHOUGH WE TEND TO BELIEVE LATTER IN VIEW OF HIS NOTED CHARACTERISTIC OF HONESTY AND FORTHRIGHTNESS.

14. PM REFUSED TO COMMIT HIMSELF ON QUESTION OF FUTURE GOP REQUEST FOR MILITARY AID. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES, IN CONTRAST, WHEN ASKED QUESTION LATER THAT AFTERNOON ANSWERED AFFIRMATIVELY AND DIRECTLY, NOTING THAT GOP ORIENTED TOWARDS FIGHTING A SUBVERSIVE-TYPE WAR BECAUSE

OF AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT, AND MUST NOW GEAR UP FOR NEW TYPE
MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS.
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